

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KUALA 05859 150854Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 HA-05 IO-13 ISO-00 INSE-00 PA-01 ICA-11

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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5485

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 5859

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, MY

SUBJECT: ANNOUNCEMENT OF ADDITIONAL BOAT REFUGEE PAROLE

REF: STATE 151574

CHARGE INFORMED GOM MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICIAL
JUNE 15 OF ANNOUNCEMENT, PER PARA 2 REFTEL. CHARGE NOTED
THAT NEWS MIGHT BE PARTICULARLY TIMELY IN LIGHT OF THIS
MORNING'S PRESS REPORTS RE FOREIGN MINISTER'S REMARKS
ON REFUGEES AT CURRENT ASEAN MINISTERIAL MEETING IN PATTAYA.

2. (RITHAUDDEEN REPORTEDLY SAI "BY ALL INDICATIONS, MORE
AND MORE REFUGEES WILL COME. WHILE OUR HUMANITARIAN
PRINCIPLES ARE STRONG, WE CANNOT CONTINUE TO BEAR THESE
RESPONSIBILITIES INDEFINITELY. THE MATTER SHOULD BE TACKLED
AT SOURCE TO REDUCE OR PREVENT THE OUTFLOW. WHILE WE ARE
APPRECIATIVE OF THE ACTIONS OF SOME COUNTRIES AND THE
UNHCR, THERE MUST BE MORE READINESS ON THE PART OF
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COUNTRIES ABLE TO DO SO TO ABSORB THE REFUGEES THAT
HAVE COME THROUGH. IT IS HOPED THAT THERE WOULD BE
SOME COORDINATION IN THE EFFORTS OF THOSE COUNTRIES
WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF THE UNHCR SO THAT THE
REFUGEE PROBLEM CAN BE TACKLED SYSTEMATICALLY AND
EXPEDITIOUSLY. OUR COMMITMENT IS CONSISTENT WITH OUR
ACTION. THESE PEOPLE ARE BEING ALLOWED TEMPORARY

SANCTUARY HRE UNTIL THEY ARE RESETTLED PERMANENTLY SOMEWHERE.")

3. MFA OFFICIAL WAS PLEASED WITH THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S ANNOUNCEMENT AND SAID THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S REMARKS WERE NOT AIMED AT THE U.S., WHICH THE GOM FEELS IS ALREADY MAKING A VERY IMPRESSIVE RESETTLEMENT EFFORT. RATHER, IT WAS AIMED PRIMARILY AT GETTING OTHER, ADDITIONAL, COUNTRIES TO DO MORE ALSO.

4. IN RESPONSE TO CHARGE'S INTEREST IN RITHAUDDEEN'S REMARKS RE TACKLING THE PROBLEM "AT SOURCE", OFFICIAL INDICATED THAT THE INTENTION WAS NOT TO ENCOURAGE THE FORCIBLE RETENTION OF THOSE WHO SINCERELY SEEK POLITICAL ASYLUM AS REFUGEES BUT RATHER TO PERSUADE THE SRV TO TAKE REASONABLE MEASURES TO CONTROL THE OUTFLOW RATHER THAN PERMITTING IT TO PROCEED UNRESTRICTED AS THE MALAYSIANS PRESENTLY PERCEIVE IT. HE SAID THIS WAS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT IN VIEW OF THE POSSIBLE MASS EXODUS OF ETHNIC CHINESE FROM VIETNAM.

5. COMMENT: THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS CLEARLY WELL-RECEIVED, AND ALSO VERY TIMELY AS FAR AS THE GOM'S LATEST PRONOUNCEMENTS ON THE REFUGEE PROBLEM ARE CONCERNED.

RITHAUDDEEN'S REITERATION AT THE PRESTIGIOUS PATTAYA
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FORUM OF THE GOM COMMITMENT TO PROVIDE FIRST ASYLUM IS ENCOURAGING. WE ARE NOT CLEAR WHAT, IF ANYTHING, ELSE THE GOM HAS IN MIND RE "TACKLING THE PROBLEM AT SOURCE", AND THE MFA OFFICIAL OFFERED NO FURTHER DETAILS.
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